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April 13, 2011

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliot, III  
Chairman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, SW, Suite 1220  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Chairman Elliot:

*Ex Parte 705*

I am writing to express the Knoxville Chamber's support for a strong freight railroad network, not only in our state/region, but across the nation. As the U.S. pulls itself out of the Great Recession, we need to avoid increased regulation that could reverse progress by damaging the ability of the rail industry to reinvest and provide strong service.

The Chamber supports a healthy freight rail network that encourages reinvestment by the rail industry, supports job growth, and continues the economic recovery. As the lead economic development agency in the Knoxville region, the Chamber regularly interacts with businesses interested in locating a facility in the area. Recently, companies have become more concerned about rail access, due in large part to the competitive cost of that shipping method.

The Chamber opposes any policy or regulatory changes that would hinder the freight railroads' ability to continue investing billions of dollars annually in private capital to grow and modernize the nation's rail infrastructure. It also respectfully requests that no regulatory or policy changes be pursued at this time by the STB. America needs to maintain the strong and well-balanced regulatory environment that is in place today.

Thank you for our consideration of the Knoxville Chamber's position.

Sincerely,

Michael Edwards  
President & CEO